



# IT'S A NEWSLETTER

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear ITSA Members and Friends,

Welcome back to It's a Newsletter (March 2020) ITSA's regular bulletin and updates. I'm delighted to bring you this version that is packed with exciting ITSA news, members' success stories and the continuous upward rising of its International Journal of Tourism Cities (IJTC).

You'll see that ITSA and its members are continuing to make great impacts and progress at an unprecedented fast pace. So, as you read and relish this issue, you are cordially encouraged to forward your ideas and suggestions to be included in future editions.

Before leaving you to enjoy reading this latest version of It's a Newsletter, I must reaffirm that it is always an honour to work with you all and wish you continuous success.

Happy Greetings from London and  
Best ITSA Regards

The Editor



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# The President's Message

## SAFEGUARDING TRAVELER AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Greetings ITSA friends! How is life treating you?

Recently, I have been contemplating what tourism and hospitality can do to safeguard the well-being of travelers, communities, and our planet. In this age of acceleration thanks to digital and other technological advances, more than ever, I feel tourism and hospitality can play an increasingly important role in this regard. When someone first gets on a roller coaster ride, it is thrilling. But if your life runs continuously at a roller coaster speed, you crave a pause button. The experiences and services we provide essentially can provide that pause button that everyone desires. I recently wrote an article with a colleague from Industrial Engineering reflecting on this very idea of being cognizant about the role of tourism as a personal health and wellness resource and how to best leverage design factors to communicate, deliver, and sustain the benefits of tourism to individuals. The rapid changes and opportunities for the hospitality and tourism industries spurred by new technology and market forces are exciting. More than ever, I think we need to have conversations regarding how to enhance the wellness benefits of tourism offerings, and the social responsibilities endowed within our industry. Technologies afford us so many possibilities to improve business efficiency, but how do we align these possibilities with what is optimal in terms of the end goal of taking care of consumer and community well-being? A major takeaway from our research is that the tourism and hospitality industry should carefully evaluate how increasingly automated processes and services impact traveler and destination community well-being outcomes.

I know you are all doing cutting research on various aspects of the tourism phenomenon prescient in nature. I encourage all of you to participate in a conversation about the future of tourism and the challenges in your own geo-regions and communities. Given the wide geographic nature of ITSA and our vision of bridging the gaps between geographic regions, I envision ITSA to be a platform with flourishing ideas: a community where ideas flow, thoughts are respected, and human connections are cherished. Specifically, I am proposing two ideas to build our ITSA community with flourishing ideas and care.

**ITSA THOUGHT NUGGETS.** This thought nuggets program invites write-ups from our regional vice presidents and our members to share Geo-regional based news, thoughts, ideas, trends, and challenges. Basically, what are some things that keep you up at night? We are seeking ideas that can be, but do not necessarily have to be, with a research bent. They may be derived from a geographic region based phenomenon, be it social, cultural, economic, political or technological, that interfaces with tourism and hospitality. I am after something that can stimulate conversations- something more free flow, story-telling, and not research binding if that makes any sense to you. I hope you enjoy the collections of wisdom of these nuggets from our ITSA colleagues. We welcome submissions of thought nuggets any time of the year from all of you. Together, we will build ITSA's golden nuggets.



**ITSA2020 Jakarta and Singapore (August 11-15, 2019).** The planning for our conference is in full swing. We thank our Indonesian and Singapore hosts for providing a home base for ITSA's next gathering. Thank you, Dr. Devi Kauser from Universitas Pancasila, Indonesia, Dr. Bhati Abhishek from James Cook University Singapore, and the entire conference planning committee for your hard work. Let's take this event as an occasion to pause, share, reflect, and connect with one another. Tea, coffee, music, dance and research. Nothing less than that. We are going to practice what we preach - that is we are going to include creative programming elements that optimally facilitate scholarly exchanges, but also allow room for attendees to feel well, feel connected, and feel inspired for research and something bigger than research. ITSA to me is a geographically and culturally diverse, and yet tight knit community. Let's relish our face time, relish the presence, feel connected, and have fun. Let's be more human and less robotic. Let's enjoy the intellectual energy and the warmth that you are all going to bring to ITSA2020.

**ITSA is growing.** We welcome two dynamic researchers to become ITSA Research domain leaders: Dr. Mimi Li from Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and Dr. Ugljesa Stankov from University of Novi Sad. We also welcome our first research domain leader Dr. Ksenia Kirrilova to serve a new role for ITSA. She will be the next ITSA Research Director. Thank you, Dr. Kirrilova for your willingness to serve and dedicate your time and talent in helping ITSA grow to be a tourism ThinkTank. Our research and our thoughts matter because they can help move tourism forward.

Best wishes,

Xinran



Dr. Xinran Lehto  
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## CALL FOR PAPERS

# 8th ITSA Biennial Conference

## Culture, People, and Technology - the Driving Forces for Tourism Cities

**Jakarta, Indonesia**  
**August 11 - 13, 2020**

The conference theme centered on how culture, people, and technology is shaping tourism cities. Culture, and the creative industries it inspires, is a vital asset for cities' economic competitiveness and attractiveness. However, rising population, urbanization, rapid development, and even tourism, often place pressure to the cities' cultural and heritage resources. People are important component of any tourism cities as they are the key behind the cities' dynamic and vibrancy. People as residents play their important

role as host, business owners, human resources in the tourism industry, and even as the guardians of cultural and heritage resources. Tourists as people coming to destinations also come with different motives and needs, often impacting on how tourism industry operates. Technology, especially information and communication technology (ICT) is the most far-reaching changes to our society. It has been innovatively used to enhance quality of life of the residents and to enable tourists to have better experience.

## Submission Guidelines

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- All papers must be original and not simultaneously submitted to another journal or conference.
- A Pre-Conference Proceedings will be provided in digital format (flash drive) that will be distributed at the conference. Authors who wish to have their papers in Pre-Conference Proceedings must submit the full paper by June 30th, 2020.
- There will be no peer review of full papers submitted to the Pre-Conference Proceedings. All papers received that conform to the full paper submission instructions and copyright restrictions will be included without additional editing. Please format your manuscript using the Full Paper Template and Instructions file.
- Authors must obtain written permission to use copyrighted material in their full papers. In general, it is suggested that you remove all copyrighted material from your paper. Papers for which this is an issue will not be included in the Pre-Conference Proceedings.
- Please format your full paper using the conference full paper format template and instructions (<https://itsaconference2020.com/call-for-papers/>)

## Topics

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This call for papers invites papers from four major themes of culture, people, technology and city tourism with the following topics –and other relevant topics related to culture, people, technology and cities. The committee will select four best papers, one for each theme.



### **Theme 1** CULTURE

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- Cultural resources and tourism
- Managing cultural tourism
- Responsible marketing in cultural tourism
- Managing visitor experience in cultural tourism
- Visitor management in cultural tourism
- Governance, partnerships, and public participation in cultural tourism
- Local wisdom in cultural tourism



### **Theme 2** PEOPLE

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- Human resource management in tourism and hospitality
- Tourism and hospitality education
- Community participation and empowerment
- Human resource planning in tourism and hospitality
- Quality of life enhancement among tourism host community
- Tourist behavior and markets



### **Theme 3** TECHNOLOGY

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- Smart tourism destination
- Big data and tourism intelligence
- Digital marketing in hospitality, travel, and event
- Various applications of eTourism
- Tourists behaviour in the digital era
- Technological innovations in tourism and hospitality
- Developing eTourism ecosystem



### **Theme 4** CITY TOURISM

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- Managing resources for city tourism products
- Planning and designing tourism in cities
- Risk and disaster management in city tourism
- Sustainable tourism in cities
- City tourism governance
- Events and festivals
- The role of museums and galleries in tourism cities

## Other information

Conference website: <http://itsaconference2020.com>

Submission link: <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=itsa2020>

Abstract registration deadline: April 15, 2020

Submission deadline: June 30, 2020

All questions about submissions should be emailed to [admin@itsaconference2020.com](mailto:admin@itsaconference2020.com)



# ITSA 2020 Post-Conference Research Development Workshops

Singapore, 15 August 2020

We invite you to attend the post-conference Research Development Workshops in Singapore, hosted by James Cook University, Singapore. The workshop is organized around specific themes and will focus on research brainstorming, group strategizing, and writing. True to the ITSA mission, the Workshops is dedicated to scholarly exchange between researchers and practitioners, collaboration of scholars in developed and developing countries, reducing geographic and cultural barriers. We hope the Symposium will result in promising plans for collaborations and innovative research agendas.

## WORKSHOPS THEMES (LEADERS):

- **World cuisines & healthy foods in tourism** (Dr. Hera Oktadiana, James Cook University, Australia)
- **Children in theme parks, resorts, and cruises** (Dr. Mimi Li, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University; Dr Zohre Mohammadi James Cook University Singapore)
- **Human factors in tourism experience design** (Dr. Xinran Lehto, Purdue University; Dr. Mark Lehto, Purdue University, USA)
- **E-mindfulness and tourism** (Dr. Uglješa Stankov, University of Novi Sad, Serbia)
- **Existentialism & tourism anti-consumption** (Dr. Ksenia Kirillova, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University)
- **Vandalism, crime, and scams in tourism** (Prof. Philip Pearce, James Cook University, Australia; Prof. Abhishek Bhati, James Cook University Singapore)
- **Digital transformation in hospitality and tourism organizations** (Dr. Iis Tussyadiah, University of Surrey; Dr. Dan Wang, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University)
- **Experoutination (Youli) and World History of Travel Narratives: Western vs Eastern Perspectives** (Prof. Wu Bihu, Peking University, China)
- **Crisis and disaster recovery** (Dr. Gabby Walters, University of Queensland)

For more information on the workshop, please visit the conference webpage:  
<https://itsaconference2020.com/post-conference-workshop/>

## A Precious Historic Castle, A Devastating Fire, and Hope

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When I was asked to share tourism related stories in my region, several relatively current issues came to my mind. For one, overtourism is a big issue now in Japan especially in popular destinations like Kyoto. A Japanese new word “KANKOU KOUGAI” (literal translation maybe “tourism pollution”) is generally used to refer to the phenomenon. Perhaps related to this is an issue of sustainable tourism development. That is usually concerned about the natural environment in the past but now includes social aspects, too. Related to this are local efforts, such holding regular art events, to revitalize the area and attract tourists.

Also, the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games which will be held as we attend the ITSA conference in Indonesia/Singapore across the ocean is one big international event that attracts many people's attention. A

third related phenomenon is how cruise is affecting inbound and outbound tourism in Japan. A particular political issue casting a shadow upon Japanese tourism is the relationship between the Japanese and Korean governments. We are losing big numbers of inbound tourists to Korea. Casino is another topic some put keen eyes on. Currently, casinos are banned in Japan, but the government is planning to make a new regulation to give a permission to selected areas to have IR, Integrated Resorts, that include casinos.

As I contemplate, however, I cannot focus my thought on anything but the recent fire at Shuri Castle, in a UNESCO World Heritage site on Japan's southern island of Okinawa (where I live). The tragedy happened on 31st of October, ironically during the week of annual Shuri Castle Festival. It was personally shocking to have lost this precious complex. It has a significant historical and cultural meaning, as it was originally built in 13th





century as a castle of Ryukyu kingdom, independent from Japan, burned down during WWII leaving only the walls, and rebuilt in 1992. It then became a World Heritage in 2000 (although the castle buildings themselves are not actually World Heritage, but the site itself together with other castles in Okinawa). It is a great loss of something with such cultural and historical values.

Yet, what astonished me more is that both locals and non-local were in great sor-

In interview on TV news, some local people said “Shuri Castle was the heart and soul of Okinawans”. The fire at Notre Dame this April is still clear on our memory. Unlike Notre Dame, what was lost with the fire were replica buildings of the castle. But still, it seems it means a lot.

There are many fund-raising efforts reported both in Okinawa and outside of Okinawa. Among others, the local government of Naha City started a Japanese

tax-exempt-cloud-funding to receive donations for rebuilding the castle with the goal amount of one hundred million yen (about nine hundred thousand US dollars).

Within 3 days, the goal was been achieved and, as it keeps accepting the donations, it has reached 3 million yen at the time I write this. This is an outstanding amount of money to collect in such a short period of time. On the

crowdfunding site, there are many comments left by donors. Some are Okinawan people who express how sad they are and how they want to be of some help. Some are non-Okinawans who referred to their previous visit to the castle and wishes for re-visit, and also those who have not yet visited but are looking forward to.

Shuri Castle is often used as a symbol of Okinawa and is a typical visiting site for both domestic and international visitors. Perhaps because the visual image of the castle is quite vivid to remember and perhaps because it is listed as a World Heritage site, people in Japan (and those from abroad who are interested in Okinawa) recognize Shuri Castle very well. This tragedy of losing the castle makes me think of various aspects of it related to tourism both directly and indirectly. These include sense of place, identity and place, world heritage and image/symbol/meaning, place attachment – and differences of those between local people and others (both those visited before and not visited), to list a few.



row for the loss – as if their own or family’s house was burnt to ashes. I was sad, too, and tears came from my eyes as I watched the news on TV and movie images on the internet. But it seems to be more than that for many.



## GREAT TIMES FOR NEW UF DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, HOSPITALITY AND EVENT MANAGEMENT



Dr Svetlana Stepchenkova  
Associate Professor  
Department of Tourism, Hospitality  
and Event Management  
University of Florida

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The department of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management (THEM) at the University of Florida was established in August 2019 and opened to students during last Fall. Previously part of the department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management, the split reflects the changes and growth of the industry and aims to help fulfill UF's goal of rising to the top five of the U.S. News & World Report national public university ranking. With more focused engaged learning and profes-

sional development experiences through internships, field trips and guest speakers, faculty expects more THEM graduates meeting the demands of the industry and filling out the abundance of jobs available in the market.

In its short existence, the department already brings two great news to prove its excellence. Four undergraduate students placed as top 3 finalists in the PCMA (Professional Convention Management Association) annual student



competition in early December 2019. Competing with university teams from around the US, the group was composed by three seniors Julia Clow, Shawna Gray and Cassidy Mandelbaum and the first-year student Alexis Brengman. Their project selected a cookie convention in the Kansas City area and concentrated in face-to-face events, which impressed the jury in such a digital era. Part of an extracurricular research project for the Fall semester, the group was advised by Annamarie Sisson, lecturer at UF THEM, who was thankful for being able to provide the opportunity to students to interact with top event management professionals in the country. Annamarie is looking forward to this year's event and working with more talented UF THEM students.

The second accomplishment was from two PhD candidates, Shihan (David) Ma and Lijuan Su in collaboration with Dr. Andrei Kirilenko, faculty and researcher at the Eric Friedheim Tourism Institute. The trio won the "Best Insights" award prize of \$5,000 at the Expedia X ENTER2020 Data Science Competition, part of the ENTER20 conference held at the University of Surrey, UK, between Janu-

ary 8 and 10, 2020. Expedia Group challenged competitors with the theme "Socially Responsible and Inclusive Tourism", and participants were expected to use accommodation data provided by the Expedia Group and additional data to rank the communities that were more impacted by tourism activities in the nation. The group differentiated themselves from the other five presenters by their meticulousity. They used ten other data sources to support the analysis of indicators highlighted by the United Nation's World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)'s as "Inclusive and Socially Responsible Tourism" development goals, as well as other general factors such as economic resources, employment, income, education, crime, health conditions, etc. The group performed a detailed analysis of US counties and presented the data using geographic mapping tools. Their results show that higher performance of the accommodation industry in an area positively impacts the local communities. Not surprisingly, the study highlights California and Florida, the "sunshine states", as where the impact is most visible.

As we advance in 2020 the department is already receiving news from other scholarships and accomplishments from students and faculty and expects to have a successful year ahead. THEM is accepting applications for Undergraduate and Masters degrees, and more information can be found online at <http://ufl.edu/about/departments/them>.



From left to right: Shihan (David) Ma, Dr. Andrei Kirilenko, and Lijuan Su



## Town Centres, Relationships and a Very Special Rose



**Dr J. Andres Coca-Stefaniak**

Associate Professor of Tourism and  
Events, University of Greenwich  
Co-Editor in Chief

*International Journal of Tourism Cities*

It is less than a year since I had one of those moments we often superficially, and perhaps somewhat carelessly, tend to refer to as an 'epiphany'. I was walking through the beautiful UNESCO World Heritage listed district of Bryggen in Bergen (Norway). My companion was one of Norway's most influential and charismatic individuals in the field of place management and urban regeneration – a cultured and mild-mannered businessman and intellectual with a fine sense of humour. We strolled past enticing shops full of crafts and souvenirs actually made in Norway – rather than China –, restaurants and cafes serving local delicacies with ships and ferries sailing in and out of a harbour that forged the history of this Scandinavian city through the free flow of goods and ideas fostered by the Hanseatic League of cities and market towns in northern Europe nine hundred years ago. Beyond the

harbour and the city, nature quickly took over with mountains and fjords.

Inevitably, as we slowly exhausted lighter conversation topics, including what team was more likely to win the English Premier Football League trophy that season or the merits of different tapas dishes from my native Spain, our conversation drifted towards our mutual professional interests and the reason why I was in Norway: urban regeneration, the management of town centres and tourism destinations, the branding of places, the seemingly unsurmountable challenges faced by small retail businesses in town centres and, ultimately, the strategic crossroads that so many town centres and urban tourism destinations seem to find themselves at today with regards to their longer-term socio-economic sustainability. It was at this point that my companion, who is fascinated among

other things by the spiritual dimension of cities, stopped and looked me in the eye.

‘Andres, do you know why I love visiting Bergen with my grandchildren?’ he asked turning towards me. I ventured a number of plausible though somewhat common reasons, including having a slice of cake in a cafe, an ice cream whilst going for a stroll around the harbour, going to see a children’s play in the theatre, but he just smiled warmly at me and shook his head. His eyes light up as his mind searched for the English words that would best convey the significance of what he wanted to share with me. ‘It gives me a chance to bring the streets and buildings alive through story telling’, he said. ‘We enjoy the city as if we were time travellers. Every time we explore something different, even when we have been there before’, he added. ‘My grandchildren love it. It gives me so much pleasure ... and pride too!’, he beamed.

It was then I realised that as an academic, in spite of all the research I and so many other colleagues had done in this field over the last two decades, we have barely scratched the surface. The future of our towns, cities and tourism destinations is surely in the way we engage with them and the care we put into them. Like people, places are increasingly feeling more and more lonely. Why? Maybe because we are too busy to forge stronger relationships with them. The words of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry in his timeless book “The Little Prince” perhaps describe this so much better than I ever could:

“You are beautiful, but you are empty,” he [The Little Prince] went on. “One could not die for you. To be sure, an ordinary passerby would think that my rose looked just like you – the rose that belongs to me. But in herself alone she is more important than all the hundreds of other roses: because it is she that I have watered; because

it is she that I have put under the glass globe; because it is she that I have sheltered behind the screen; because it is for her that I have killed the caterpillars (except the two or three that we saved to become butterflies); because it is she that I have listened to, when she grumbled, or boasted, or ever sometimes when she said nothing. Because she is my rose.

“What is essential is invisible to the eye,” the little prince repeated, so that he would be sure to remember.

“It is the time you have wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important.”

And so, our town centres, tourism destinations and little secret corners only we know should be our roses ... and we need to invest more of our precious time into them to bring them back to life as so many generations before us did over centuries of history.



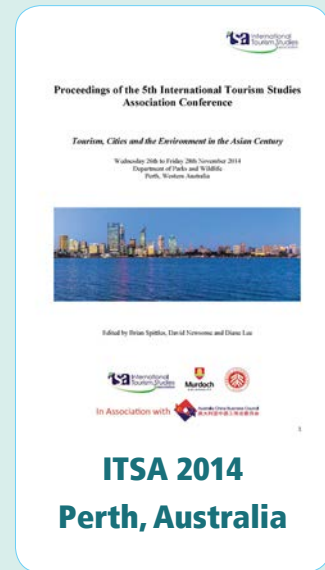
**ITSA 2018**  
**Tshwane, South**

Van Zyl, Cina (eds) (2018) Collaboration and Co-Creation Opportunities in Tourism: Proceedings of the International Tourism Studies Association Conference (ITSA 2018). Proceedings of the International Tourism Studies Association Conference 2018. ITSA Biennial Conference Proceedings, 7. University of South Africa, Tshwane.



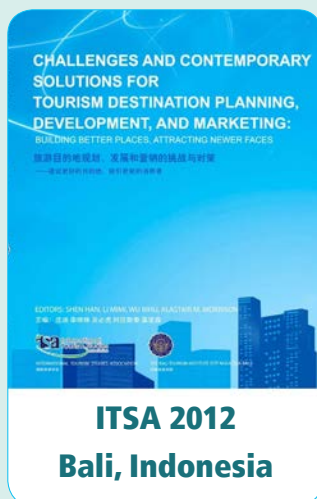
**ITSA 2016**  
**London, UK**

Chaperson, Samantha and MacLeod, Nicola (eds.) (2017) Tourism in contemporary cities: Proceedings of the International Tourism Studies Association Conference (ITSA 2016). Proceedings of the International Tourism Studies Association Conference 2016. ITSA Biennial Conference Proceedings, 6. University of Greenwich, London.



**ITSA 2014**  
**Perth, Australia**

Spittles, Brian; Newsome, David & Lee, Diane (eds.) (2014) Tourism, Cities and the Environment in the Asian Century: Proceedings of the International Tourism Studies Association Conference (ITSA 2014). Proceedings of the International Tourism Studies Association Conference 2014. ITSA Biennial Conference Proceedings, 5. Murdoch University, Perth.



**ITSA 2012**  
**Bali, Indonesia**

Shen, H., Li, M., Wu, B. & Morrison, A. & Hanifah, M. (2012) Challenges and Contemporary Solutions for Tourism Destination Planning, Development and Marketing: Building Better Places, Attracting Newer Faces (ITSA 2014), ITSA Biennial Conference Proceedings, 4, Bali Tourism Institute, Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia



**ITSA 2010**  
**Shah Alam, Malaysia**

Kian, L. & Hanifah, M. (2010) Cross Cultural Tourism in and Beyond Asia, Proceedings of the International Tourism Studies Association Conference (ITSA 2010), ITSA Biennial Conference Proceedings, 3, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Malaysia



**ITSA 2008**  
**Shanghai, China**

Wu, Bihu; Feng, Xuegang; & Gao, Jun (eds.) (2008) Mega Events and Urban Tourism: Proceedings of the International Tourism Studies Association Conference (ITSA 2008). Proceedings of the International Tourism Studies Association Conference 2008. ITSA Biennial Conference Proceedings, 2.

The proceedings from our biennial conference are now all available for free download, from the ITSA web site at: <http://intl tourismstudies.com/conference-proceedings/>



# Tourism Symposium at James Cook University in Singapore



Dr. Abhishek Bhati  
Associate Professor  
James Cook University Singapore  
ITSA Regional Vice President  
South Asia

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At the Tourism Symposium — held at James Cook University (JCU) in Singapore on 23 August 2019 — both students and industry experts alike explored what it means to achieve service excellence and how businesses in the tourism and hospitality industry can create quality experiences. In words of A/Prof Abhishek Bhati Campus Dean and Regional Vice President ITSA, “Service excellence is not an option but imperative for tourism and hospitality enterprises to develop sustainable competitive advantage”.

Attendees included academics and students taking the Bach-

elor of Business (Majoring in Hospitality and Tourism Management), as well as the Master of International Tourism and Hospitality Management at James Cook University in Singapore. A special group of 12 visiting final year students, and their lecturer, from Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University in Germany were also present at the symposium.

The symposium was organised as part of a management project, that plans conferences and events, by LIVE!BLUE!LIVE! — a team made up of students taking the Conference and Events Management subject in this term.

Taking a deep dive into the theme of achieving service excellence and creating quality experiences, one of the main questions put forward in the symposium asked what we think of when we think of service excellence. Is it being able to deliver on promises to customers? Or perhaps it is going the extra mile to make customers feel special?



From left to right: Assistant Professor Bona Kim, Mr Ooi Peng Ee, Ms Shinn Teo, and Mr Simon Yip

These questions and more were tackled by a panel of subject matter experts — comprising of Assistant Professor Bona Kim, Hospitality Business Program, Design and Specialised Business Cluster, Singapore Institute of Technology; Mr Ooi Peng Ee, Head of TTG Global Commerce and Development; Ms Shinn Teo, Senior Admissions & Recruitment Officer at Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne; and Mr Simon Yip, Vice President Sales, Asia of Silversea Cruises.

Each of the panellists shared their knowledge and experiences in the illuminating presentation and discussion session. This uncovered interesting insights — concept of marketing myopia in tourism and hospitality, and how the strategy for preventing and reducing customer dissatisfaction should be managed differently from the strategy for increasing satisfaction levels.

Following the presentation and discussion by the panellists was a Speed Presentation competition, consisting of a series of 3-minute presentations from a number of JCU students and three students from Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University, on the subject “How can tourism and hospitality businesses in the industry provide service excellence?”

The competition was similar to our annual Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition, where participants are tasked with condensing their scientific research project into three minutes, while ensuring that it can be easily understood by a non-specialist audience.

“The Tourism Symposium was meant to

create an awareness of Creating Experiences and Service Excellence as vital to the service industry. In particular, the 3-minute Speed Presentation competition really brought out the thinking caps of students in ways where the industry can promote service excellence,” said Dr K. Thirumaran, Head of Academic Group Business, IT & Science for James Cook University in Singapore.

“James Cook University in Singapore has always been at the forefront of bringing industry professionals to engage with students, with different types of forums to discussing and realising industry needs and wants through our graduates.”

Ultimately, the Tourism Symposium was a huge success. Congratulations to the students of LIVE!BLUE!LIVE! team for a job well done on organising the event.



Dr. Abhishek Bhati addressing the assembly

## Choose Your Heroes/Heroines Well; Follow Them Wisely



**Dr. Philip Pearce**

Foundation Professor of Tourism  
Distinguished Professor  
James Cook University Australia  
Past President, ITSA

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The process of comparing oneself to others is an almost inevitable part of being human. The psychology literature recognizes that social comparison processes can have either motivating or depressing consequences. For members of ITSA, this theme can be developed as a part of our organization's concern to be a connecting and supportive tourism research group. So, who do you have as heroes or heroines, alive or no longer with us, personally known or not, whom you think are great figures in academic (and personal) life? They may be in tourism, or beyond. Do you have some in mind?

Why should we think about this? One of the findings emerging from so much attention to social media is that many people are receiving daily positive stories from the lives of others. Academically, this often takes the form of people representing themselves at confer-

ences, giving keynote talks, listing another publication and so on. We must be discerning about this stream of 'success'. The good news pieces can have a cumulative effect. A kind of "everybody else is doing great things and I am in my office marking assignment number 150 and not being able to participate because of a lack of money, unfinished research efforts and the pressure of my wider life."

So, let us pause and mull over these successes. Some doing the posting are full time professors without many teaching responsibilities. Some are editors of journals. This group in particular is curiously given a false academic rock star status and are courted by Universities and interested academics seeking to glean ways to publish faster and more easily. I want to suggest that most of these figures are not good heroes or heroines. They live in worlds unlike the main run



of tourism, hospitality and events academics. If you have a busy job without the accoutrements of money, freedom and accumulated status credits, then choosing these figures as heroes and heroines, some of whom shamelessly promote themselves, is not a recommended path.

So, what is the alternative? I think it is to look for the “ideas people” - those who have and are offering creative, novel and new ways of thinking and researching. How do they do what they are doing? What are the secrets to social life, (or more specifically) tourism, events and hospitality experience and provision that they are unlocking? How can some part of that be the inspiration for yourself? Where might you look for these people? Biographies and autobiographies are a start. Sometimes there are cumulated collections of work- the German word *Festschrift* is appropriate here. Less happily, obituaries and services honoring achievements record many

amazing lives where emerging scholars can glean little pieces for their own efforts. And all importantly, you do not have to aspire to be them, just respect and borrow a little of that zeal and initiative.

You might ask then, who are my heroes or heroines. I have a lot, but I will list three here. Ellen Langer, the Harvard psychologist whose work on mindfulness is a testament to clever experimental and research design with her small synomorphic experiments having large implications for understanding human decision making, health and well-being. And yes, for tourism too. Oliver Sachs for being a larger than life figure with an original ability to see what others miss, a set of points that help us observe people much more closely than we often do. Peter Collett, less well known perhaps, but as my Oxford supervisor his ability to write well in an entertaining style about public behavior is a touchstone for my personal

ambition. But I respect them without comparing myself because their circumstances, and undoubtedly their special talents are not mine. I am cheered though, that humility rather than braggadocio was their style, always respecting that there is still so much to find out. Taking a few points of inspiration from my ‘ideas’ heroes and heroines stops me being overly impressed and therefore a touch depressed by the media stream of others’ successes.

## EU MEDITERRANEAN

This RVP's regional activity in the European Mediterranean area is well established. The University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria in Spain and Gran Canaria Tourism board are organizing next Spring Symposium in Tourism Developments (IV Gran Canaria SSTD 2020) that will be held during the 4th and 5th of June in Gran Canaria (Canary Islands, Spain).

This annual conference will be focused on “**STRATEGIES FROM MATURE TO LEADING NEUTRAL CARBON TOURIST DESTINATIONS**”. Contributions can relate to any of the issues of the Congress: Destination management; Tourism and sustainable economic development; Tourism demand trends; Economic perspectives in tourism and transport; Event Industry; Big Data Analysis; Entrepreneurship Marketing and tourism. Find out more at: <http://tides.ulpgc.es/investigacion/sstd.html>

The symposium provides an opportunity for Tourism researchers from all over the world to exchange scientific ideas and results and discuss new and emerging directions in research and practice in the field. Theoretical or applied research contributions in the form of structured abstracts are welcome. Next Gran Canaria SSTD 2020 will have two relevant keynote speakers: Dr. Zhan Su (Laval Université in Quebec) and Dr. Sangwon Park from Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

**Dr. Teresa Aguiar Quintana**  
University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain  
Regional Vice President, Mediterranean Europe



## The Humanness in Technology Innovation

—Technology doesn't have either virtue or sin; human does

Like it or not, technology is changing how we live, work and travel. Whenever talking about how all kinds of service technology and smart innovation have affected us, a friend of mine, who is also my research mentor at our department, and I always have totally opposite opinions, and neither can convince the other. She believes that today's technology is taking away the warmth and hospitality from traditional service rituals, while I am more than happy to embrace the competence and customization facilitated by various service innovations.



One day after another round of inconclusive discussion, I suddenly realize that we have kept asking

the wrong question. We two actually share the same idea, but each only sees one side of the coin. There is no wrong or right of the technology itself, but it is about how people make use of it. For my mentor, she criticizes the technology because service providers neglect her needs for interpersonal communications and emotional supports in their technology implements. On the other hand, for me, I prefer the technology as it just perfectly fits my needs for less interpersonal interaction but more personal control and efficiency. Instead of blaming or praising technology, the right question to ask is "how to better integrate diverse human needs into today's technology innovation".

We have seen tons of research demonstrating the big picture and general consumer patterns in technology acceptance and usage in tourism and hospitality. Moving forward to future research, what are the psychological mechanism be-

hind these patterns? What are the human factors driving these patterns? Can we predict, instead only observing, how the humanness may interact with the emerging technology innovation?

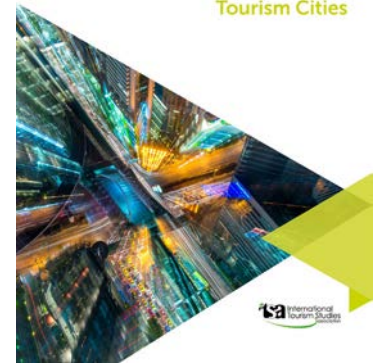
Technology doesn't have either virtue or sin; human does. Technology is only a tool, while human is the key to make it a better or worse tool. Now it's the time for us to pay great attention to the humanness in technology innovation: how the humanness may impact the current technology and also shape the future.



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## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF TOURISM CITIES UPDATE

The International Journal of Tourism Cities (IJTC), ITSA's official journal, enjoyed another busy year in 2019 with 23,295 article downloads, 234 CrossRef citations in 2019 (versus 85 in 2018 and 31 in 2017), 41 articles published (versus 32 in 2018) and a rise in the journal's CiteScore value to 1.96 from 0.86 in 2018. For the second year in a row, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, UK and Australia (in that order) remain the countries from which most of IJTC's downloads originate. We are also pleased to report that the number of annual manuscript submissions in 2019 was three times that of 2018.

The journal's editorial strategy focusing on good topics for Special Issues (SIs) edited by widely-cited Guest Editors is also delivering early signs of success. For instance, a special issue on "Overtourism and the Marketing of Smart Tourism Destinations" published in December 2019 had already achieved 1,610 downloads within less than two months of its publication – the second largest number of downloads to date for any Special Issue published in IJTC over the last three years. Another (virtual) special issue recently published and likely to provide a high level of visibility for IJTC is "New Cultures of Urban Tourism" (guest edited by Prof. Maria Gravari-Barbas, Dr. Sébastien Jacquot and Dr. Francesca Cominelli), available online at [https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/products/journals/news\\_story.htm?id=8906](https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/products/journals/news_story.htm?id=8906).



The former underused industrial wasteland behind Kings Cross station, London, is being transformed into a new urban destination.  
© Maria Gravari-Barbas (2019)

We expect 2020 to be another bumper year for IJTC and look forward to the result of our recent SSCI listing application submission, which Prof. Alastair M. Morrison and Assoc. Prof. Andres Coca-Stefaniak lead on with 17 letters and 4 videos of support from members of IJTC's Editorial Board and organisations such as the World Tourism Cities Federation in Beijing. Some of the special issues in the pipeline for the next two years include, for instance:

- “Overtourism and the Sharing Economy” - due to be published in February 2020 and Co-Guest Edited by Prof. Sergio Moreno-Gil (University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain) and Assoc. Prof. Andres Coca-Stefaniak.

- “Tourism Cities in India “ – due to be published in the second half of 2020 and Co-Guest Edited by Dr. Jithendran Kokkranikal, Prof. Alastair M. Morrison and Dr. Vanessa Gowreesunkar.

- “Sustainable Tourism Cities” – due to be published in 2021 and co-Guest Edited by Assoc. Prof. Jonathon Day (Purdue University), Prof. Alastair M. Morrison and Assoc. Prof. Andres Coca-Stefaniak.

- “Contemporary issues in tourism cities in the ASEAN region” – due to be published in 2021 and Co-Guest Edited by Dr. Hera Oktadiana and Prof. Philip Pearce.



Athens, in the former industrial area of Keramikos, new alternative cultural uses attract locals and tourists.

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IJTC's success to date could not have been achieved without the unwavering support of the journal's family, which includes ITSA members and officers, Guest and Themed Issue (TI) editors, members of the Editorial Advisory and Review Boards, reviewers and authors.

As part of the journal's future, and in view of helping IJTC to reach new heights in terms of its Scopus ranking as well as achieving other influential listings, it will become increasingly important for all those linked to IJTC to continue citing IJTC's articles and editorials in their publications in other journals. Similarly, the journal is seeking ambassadors among ITSA members to grow its visibility at international tourism conferences.



### Co-Editors- in-Chief

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The official journal of ITSA

# **INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF TOURISM CITIES**

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A peer- reviewed journal, the International Journal of Tourism Cities provides an international forum for the critical study of urban tourism and tourism cities. The journal aims to be inter- disciplinary in its appreciation of tourism cities and tourism in urban areas, and welcomes original, theoretically- informed articles from those involved in the planning, management or marketing of tourism in city destination or places adjoining urban areas.

Urban tourism and travel cover many disciplines and impinge on numerous aspects of daily life within cities. Moreover, they play a key role in domestic and international tourism in most countries, and cities often function as key travel gateways and tourism destinations.

The International Journal of Tourism Cities contents include primary research articles, expert discussions on current urban tourism issues, and tourism city case studies. Articles are selected that are relevant to both academics and practitioners. The journal particularly encourages contributions on contemporary topics and issues in urban tourism including smart cities and tourism, environmental impact and sustainable tourism development in cities, citizen and stakeholder involvement in tourism, city destination governance, and the development of policies and standards for city tourism development.

## **SUBMIT YOUR RESEARCH NOW!**

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